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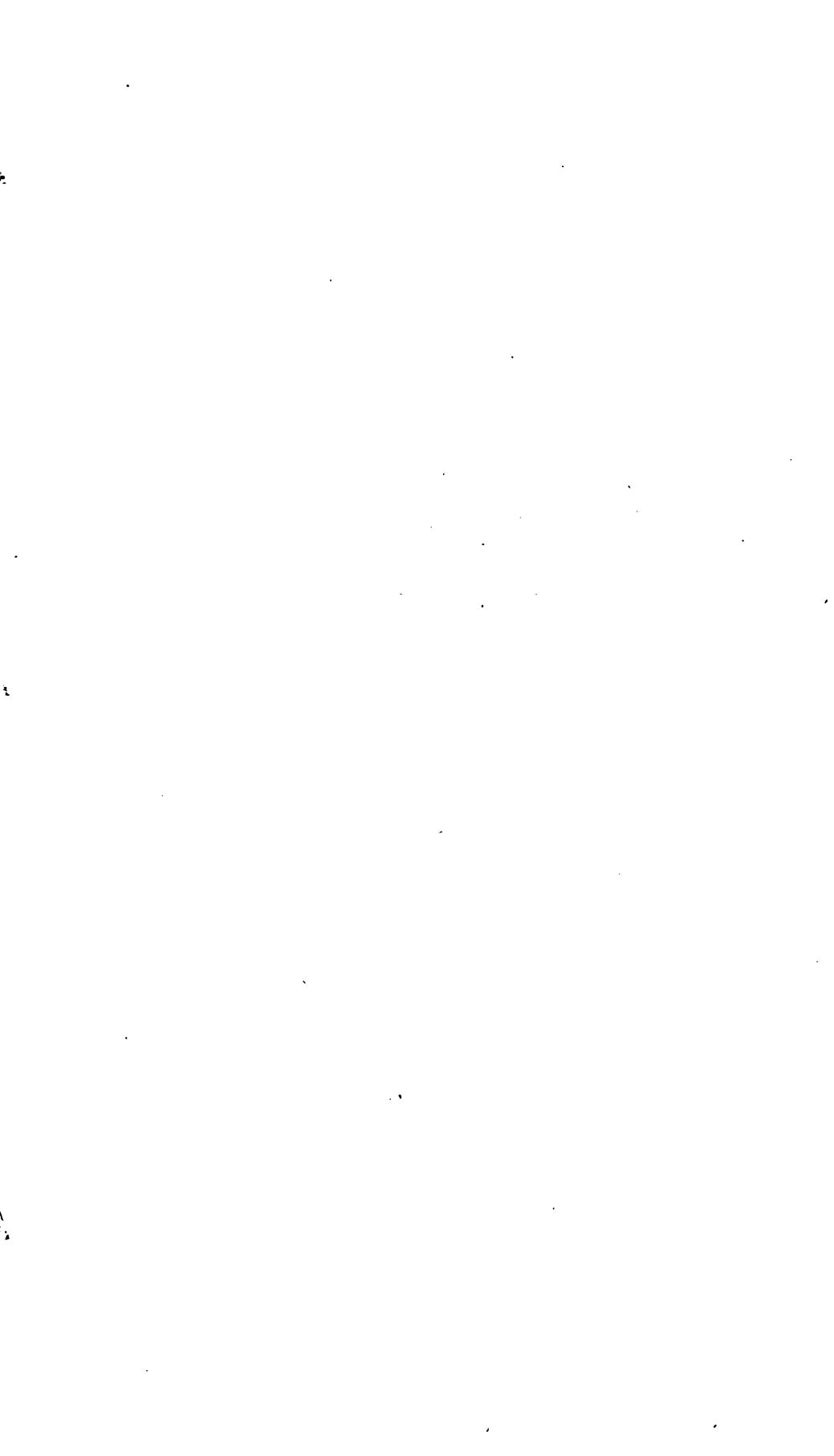


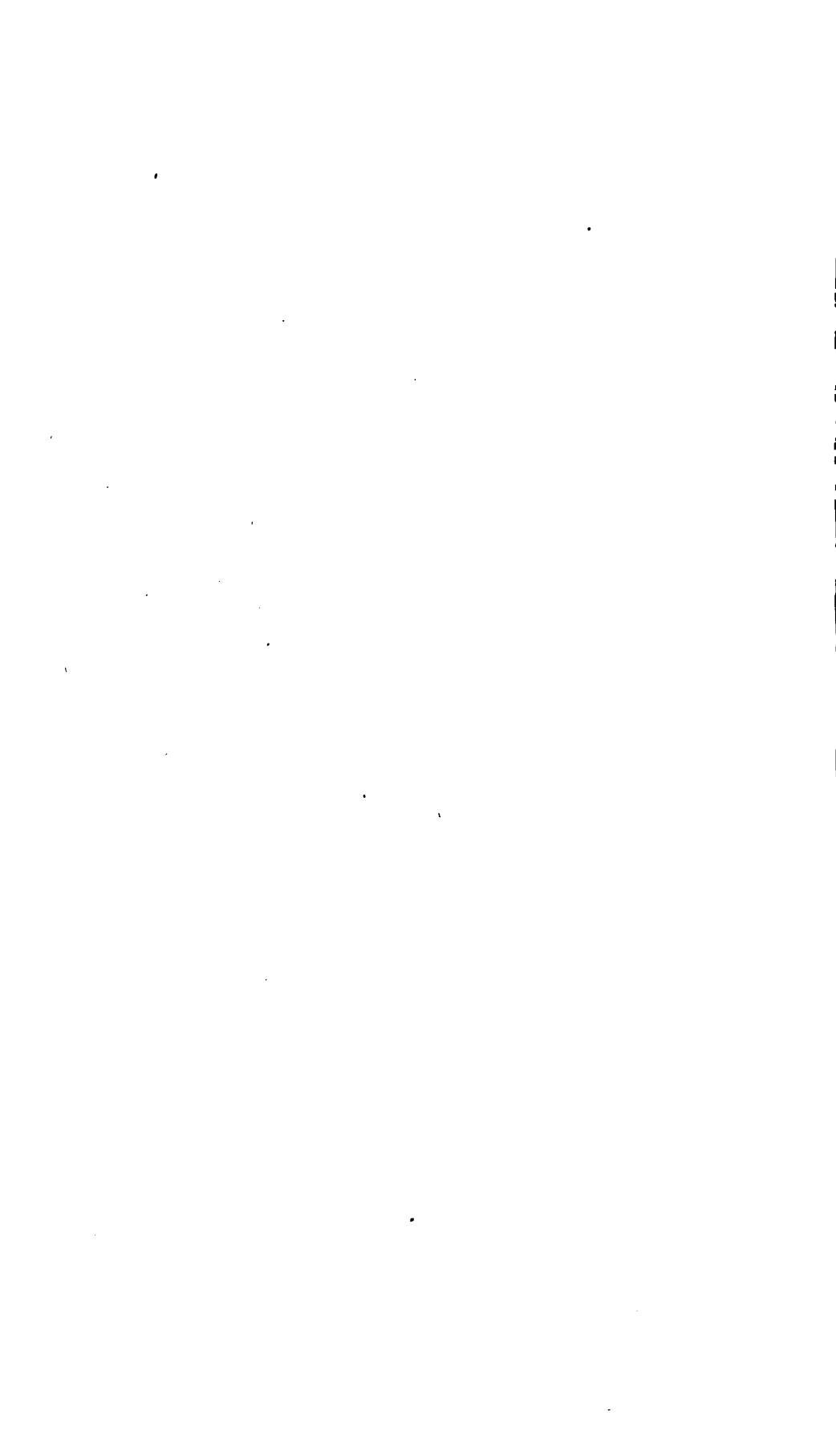
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## ORATION.

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EVERY individual, however obscure, owes duties to society at large as well as to other individuals and to himself. To enable him to perform those duties, it is important to enquire for what purposes society was instituted, and is maintained. If we conceive of man in a state of ignorance and barbarity, about to enter into society, we may suppose his inducement to be the protection from violence which it will afford him, whether of individuals or of hostile tribes, and the security with which he will be enabled to provide for the gratification of his animal wants. But in society he will find other gratifications, of a higher nature, such as he had not previously conceived. He will find the pleasure of knowledge, in which no great progress can be made but by mutual incitement and instruction and the concurrence of many minds. He will find the pleasure of mutual benevolence, and that by contributing to the happiness of others, he promotes to the highest degree his own. He will find, with respect both to knowledge and virtue, that there is enjoyment in their mere possession and exercise, independently of their results in his condition. He will find the feelings which prompt him to take an interest in the community in which he lives, and to promote its improvement, prosperity and honor, sources of the highest gratification. He will find that as others are more highly cultivated, morally and intellectually, his own security and happiness will be increased. Natural wants will become the sources of elegant arts; animal passion will be refined into moral sentiment, and all afford enjoyment more exquisite as more refined. We may pronounce, then, that though it be an indispensable object of civil society that its members should be protected, whether from domestic fraud or violence, or foreign force, yet its great and highest purpose is to promote in the highest possible degree the moral and intellectual cultivation of all its members.

It is said by Burke, "Society is indeed a contract." Subordinate contracts, for objects of occasional interest, may be dissolved at pleasure—but the State ought not to be considered as nothing better than a partnership agreement in a trade of pepper and coffee, calico or tobacco, or some other low concern, to be taken up for a little temporary interest, and to be dissolved at the fancy of the parties. It is to be looked on with other reverence; because it is not a partnership in things subservient only to the gross animal existence of a temporary and perishable nature. It is a partnership in all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in every virtue and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born. Each contract of each particular State is but a clause in the great primeval contract of eternal society, linking the lower with higher natures,

connecting the visible and invisible world, according to a fixed compact, sanctioned by the inviolable oath which holds all physical and all moral natures, each in their appointed place."

All of us owe duties to all the members of this great partnership. We owe them to the dead—to record their actions—to cherish their fame, wherein they were worthy, and to vindicate them wherein they had been misrepresented—to perpetuate, and as far as we can, improve and perfect the knowledge, the freedom and the good institutions which they have transmitted to us. As the most eloquent orator is most sensible of the power of eloquence; as the greatest poet is most alive to the charm of poetry, so those who are capable of great and generous actions will be most disposed to cultivate "the worship of the great of old." The disposition to venerate what is great and excellent, is an essential part of a well composed moral constitution, and nothing can express more strongly the idea of a people utterly depraved and debased, than to say that among them nothing is held sacred. We owe these duties to the living. He who receiving the benefits of this great association, is indifferent to its improvement and prosperity, and consults only his own ease or interest, abandons the great purposes of existence, and violates in the most criminal degree his duty and his faith. We owe them to those who are to be born—to transmit to them the inheritance of knowledge and of virtue; and that they may have cause not only to love but to be proud of their country, to transmit to them an honest, and as far as we can, an elevated fame. As we have received a country improved and adorned by the cares and labors of our ancestors, a debt is imposed on us, which we can only pay by transmitting it still more improved to posterity.

To enable us more effectually to discharge these duties, we profess to be the purpose for which this society was instituted. In setting about a great enterprise which concerns the public welfare, the first step of preparation—to borrow the expression of a man of genius—is "to purify our own hearts"—to be sure that we honestly and faithfully intend a good and generous purpose, and that no selfish or malignant passion, even unknown to ourselves, mingles with our motives and prompts us to action. Thus we obtain the best assurance of success by the confidence which will be inspired in ourselves and in those whose co-operation we shall require. And if along with the loftier motive, there should mingle, as there must and will and ought to mingle, the desire of honorable distinction for ourselves, to be perfectly sure that this is in subordination to the general useful and honest purpose. And it is not only public enterprises, commonly so called, that require this preparation. Every great work should be set about in the same spirit—intending some useful or beneficial result beyond what directly concerns ourselves alone. And I will say that no truly great work was ever accomplished, which was not thus inspired. Dr. Johnson says that *Paradise Lost* might justly be expected from the noble aspiration of Milton, when he promises to undertake something that may be of use or honor to his country.

"This is not to be obtained but by fervent prayer to that eternal spirit that can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar to touch and purify the lips of whom he

pleases. To this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation and insight into all seemly and generous acts and affairs. Till which in some measure be compact, I refuse not to sustain this expectation." In this spirit and with such aspirations we hope that we have formed our society.

The objects of human knowledge are commonly divided into physical, or natural, and moral science; and though the boundaries of these are not in every instance exactly defined, yet the division is sufficiently accurate for our present purpose. Even if I were competent to the task, the consideration of the whole circuit of human knowledge would be too extensive an undertaking for the occasion; I shall therefore confine myself to the presenting some views in relation to certain topics of moral science, such as *I suppose to be connected with the forming of the moral and intellectual character of the State.* And let me not be supposed to undervalue the cultivation of physical science. It is true I believe that no sort of knowledge has been successfully cultivated amongst any people, where every sort of knowledge was not cultivated. The nations and the ages which have excelled most in science, have excelled most in literature, in arts and arms.

It has been observed that great men appear in constellations, and it is rare indeed that an individual, by the force of his own genius and exertions, can raise himself greatly above the level of those minds by which he is surrounded. But it is not always necessary that to produce this emulation and mutual excitement which is necessary to high excellence, the individuals should be engaged in the same pursuit. Genius is fired by genius, in however different a direction it may display itself, and the success which crowns persevering and generous exertion in one pursuit, stimulates to similar exertions in another. If not essential, it is certainly very advantageous to the highest cultivation of any one department of science, that the individual should possess a general acquaintance with the whole circuit of human knowledge. It is said by Bacon that "no one can justly or successfully discover the nature of any one thing in that thing itself." No one will attain to the highest excellence in any profession or intellectual pursuit, whose knowledge is confined exclusively to that profession or pursuit. The acuteness, as well as the enlargement of mind, which is formed by the study of moral subjects, is fit preparation for the pursuit of physical science. The masculine energy and power of attention which is requisite to the attainment of mathematical science, will be suitable discipline for the successful prosecution of any other intellectual pursuit whatever; for there is no human pursuit in which these are not required. And what is calculated to inspire higher moral conceptions, than the observation of fitness, order, beauty and intelligence through the whole of the physical creation?

Under the head of moral science are ranked the philosophy of intellect; morals, properly so called, which relate to the formation of character and the conduct of life, laws, and polities. History, so far as it is philosophy teaching by example, must also be regarded as moral science. To this must likewise be referred the productions of imagination, poetry, and fictitious narrative, and, indeed, in their highest purposes, the whole of literature and the fine arts. It is not my purpose to enter into a detailed and separate consideration of these several departments of moral science; but to point out some portions of them which seem to be peculiarly adapted to our pursuit.

*every*

In determining to what objects we shall apply our intellectual exertions, the first inquiry should be, which are best adapted to our circumstances, habits, and powers. Without neglecting any thing of the proper objects of human pursuits, it is obviously wise that we should devote ourselves to that in which we are best qualified to excel. The oracle is true and authoritative as ever it was, which directs—follow nature. Whether it be the original bent of genius, inscrutably imposed by nature, or hereditary predisposition, derived from the race of which we are sprung, or arising out of circumstances of early education or the accidental direction of our faculties, scarcely any one has attained the highest excellence, who did not obey the impulse which seemed to direct him to a particular course of action or of study. And this is true no less of people and communities, than of individuals. The people who, disregarding their own circumstances, genius, and character, should seek to form themselves exclusively on the model of another, would set the seal to their own inferiority and degradation. Certainly we should be willing to learn of others what they are able to teach. Our standard of education is low, and the wisest and best informed amongst us are grossly ignorant. I speak not of the whole of nature, or the extent of possible knowledge, but in reference to what is elsewhere known in the world. But we should not learn in a servile spirit, nor receive unquestioned every dogma which the master may communicate. What we learn we should make our own, and adapt it to our circumstances. There is a just pride without which no people were ever great; which is more concerned about its own purposes than about the opinions of others; and which is the farthest in the world removed from that wretched vanity which would claim to be better and more enlightened than the rest of the world, and would be galled by the censures of a foreign tourist or an European periodical print. Yet even from these we should be willing to learn when they are capable of instructing, and admit the censure when it is just. It is a noble pride which can reform its errors to secure self-approbation, and a miserable vanity which would impose on others by the appearance of qualities which it does not possess. Only he who possesses great qualites can afford to admit his defects, and to despise the censure which is unjust.

The circumstance which most strongly distinguishes our own State, along with the other Southern States of this confederacy, from the rest of the modern civilized world, is the institution of domestic slavery. This, to an extent of which, perhaps, we ourselves are not aware, mixes itself with all the habits and relations of society; and will, more than any thing else, determine whatever is peculiar in the character of our people and our government. Nothing, therefore, can be more interesting to us, than that the nature of this institution, in reference to its moral and political, as well as its economical character and effects, should be thoroughly understood; and no duty more sacred and imperative devolves on this society, than the full and thorough investigation of the whole subject, in all its bearings and relations. I suggest this as the first business of the society. I believe that no one who has the slightest acquaintance with the subject—on whom argument would not be wasted—imagines it to be possible that slavery should cease to exist among us in our day, or for generations to come. Our proudest and most deeply cherished feelings—which others, if they will,

may call prejudices—our most essential interests—our humanity and consideration for the slaves themselves—nay, almost physical impossibility, forbid that this should be done by our own act ; and, thank God, we, the slaveholding communities of the South, are too strong, and on this subject too united, to admit the thought that it can be effected by external force. As to the aid which external force may derive from insurrection, so far as relates to the final success of such an attempt, we do not admit it into our thoughts. No ; if that event is ever to be brought about, it must be by a force superior to all the people and potentates of the earth. To the ordering of that great power we will bow in humble submission, knowing that he will prepare the sufferer for his calamity, and that the evil which he sends will be joined with mercy and mitigation ; but we will not yield ourselves to the disposition of mischievous and deluded men. If this institution, then, is to continue, and to be transmitted to our posterity, how infinitely important that we should thoroughly understand its character ; that if there be any good connected with it, we should derive from it all the good of which it is capable, improve it so far as it can be improved, remedy its evils and abuses where they can be remedied, and mitigate or guard against them where they cannot.

But, though slavery cannot be eradicated, it will be attacked, and we may be exposed to the greatest conceivable dangers and calamities by these attacks. It is already attacked ; and one of the most formidable evils we have to apprehend, is already in some degree incurred. It is by the diffusion of dark and uncertain rumors among the slave population, of schemes and movements which they will of course misunderstand and exaggerate, and thus giving rise to distrust and alarm, especially among the weaker and more ignorant portion of the free population, that fear, suspicions, discontent and aversion, severity and insubordination, are to be occasioned. We have been told to disregard the agitation which has been lately got up in some of our confederate States of the North. It is said that the more intelligent and virtuous portion of the people of those States—those who have most influence—the leaders in politics and conductors of the public press, are our defenders, and seek to disown and restrain the zeal of the deluded and fanatical agitators. They avow that they have no constitutional right to interfere, ~~by means of government, with the existence of slavery.~~ But let it be recollected that these very friends of ours are compelled to declare that they regard the existence of slavery as a great political and moral evil, injurious and disgraceful to the country ; and without this, they would not be heard to say what they venture to say on our behalf. All speak of the abolition of slavery as something to be effected at a future day, and so long as this expectation is held out, we cannot be assured of peace and security. This may be said to be the universal sentiment, out of the limits of the slaveholding States.

If such be the universal popular opinion, is it not probable that the fanatics will be able to excite the popular indignation, to disregard constitutional scruples, and, yielding to the exigency of the case, attempt at once to abate the nuisance, and free the country from its reproach ? When that spirit shall be aroused, the wise and the virtuous, the leaders and the men of influence, must go along with the torrent, or be swept away before it. Every dishonest politician will further inflame that spirit, that he may make it

*Answers*

available to his own purposes. Let us recollect what has been the progress of things in Great Britain. It is not many years since the united efforts of the greatest talent and influence in the kingdom were unable to procure the abolition of the slave trade. Those who were active for that object, strongly disavowed any intention to interfere with the condition of the slaves which were already in their colonies, and probably no one thought of the possibility of effecting their emancipation. One object, however, was no sooner effected, than a few but enthusiastic individuals set about to attempt the other. At first, they were without strength or influence, generally disconcerted, and their clamors scarcely heard. But public opinion condemned slavery as a moral and political evil. Greater and greater numbers were drawn to the side of the enthusiasts; their clamors became louder and more imposing; the wisest and the firmest, who knew well the mischiefs of the measure, were compelled to be silent or to acquiesce; till, under the influence of a spirit as false and fanatical as that which inspired the crusades, in our day West India emancipation has been accomplished. Thus this great and enlightened nation, of a commercial spirit, and, as we have been accustomed to think, practical and sober minded, has contrived to impoverish and render miserable many of her subjects, to destroy a material portion of her commerce, to cut off a great source of employment for her shipping and seamen, to wither a main sinew of her strength. And for what? That good may be done? That, after a period of stern military control, attended by the most harassing misery to all parties, those beautiful islands—the fairest that the sun shines on or the sea reflects—once the seats of refinement, hospitality, industry, and happiness, may become, like St. Domingo, the abode of miserable semi-barbarians—more miserable, aye, and more enslaved than they were under the dominion of their former masters. An imbecile and self-destructive policy, calculated only to excite contemptuous laughter, did not the mischiefs and sufferings which follow and accompany it, provoke the expression of indignant scorn. Are we incapable of rising to the height of the argument, that justice and mercy are the truest policy, with whatever immediate sacrifice this may be attended? No! but before we make sacrifice of our dearest interests, we will be satisfied that justice and mercy require it at our hands. We will not practice nor suffer to be practised the grossest injustice, that we may inflict the direst cruelty. Do these things offer no instruction to us? Do they not inform us of the nature of the contest we must prepare to meet, and which will require the development of all our resources? But of all others, moral resources are of greatest efficacy. If we contend in a cause which our understandings and consciences tell us to be wrong, and which the opinion of the world condemns, or if we are doubtful and vacillating in this respect, we are already prepared for defeat. But the consciousness of a good cause gives double strength to the combatant. If, upon fair and deliberate examination, it shall be found that slavery is not the enormous evil which has haunted the imaginations of men; if it shall be found that it has elevated the character of the master, and contributed to the happiness of both master and slave; if it shall appear that we are contending for justice and right, for true humanity, and for as much liberty as the imperfect nature of man will suffer him to enjoy, then, indeed, we may rely on our righteous cause, and securely anticipate triumph.

Those who have written or spoken for the purpose of condemning slavery (if any thing has been written or spoken for this purpose which it is not derogatory to our understanding to advert to) have taken for granted that it was sufficient for their purpose to show that great evils are connected with the system—that it is liable to great abuse. They collect and exaggerate (when they do not invent) the horrors and cruelties, rare and far between, which have been practised under it, and then suppose their work to be done, and ask if that system can be tolerated in the eyes of God or man which allows such enormities. As if evil were not connected with every thing human; as if horrors and cruelty were not perpetrated; as if misery, injustice and oppression did not exist under every form of civil polity on earth. They seem to suppose (if indeed they can be said to think on the subject) that the evils elsewhere existing, are inseparably incident to the imperfection of human society, and that the evils of slavery are a clear uncompensated addition to the whole mass of human wrong and suffering; instead of being, as in a great degree it undoubtedly is, in substitution for them, and perhaps, considered in all its bearings, in mitigation of them. The whole of existence is but a choice between evils. Even the practice of virtue is nothing else. He who controls his appetites and passions, or renders arduous and useful services to others, incurs a present and smaller evil to avoid a future and greater one, or to attain a good which could not otherwise be obtained; and without this, it would not be virtue. For his own inscrutable purposes, the Creator has suffered evil to exist. No one hopes to banish it from the physical or moral world; can we hope to banish it from the political world? If I should go into an European capital and collect evidence of the various and unspeakable misery it contains; the crimes—horrible, unnatural, unseen of the sun, which are daily and nightly perpetrated—the severity of penal justice which is necessary to prevent or avenge those crimes—the appalling mass of vice and profligacy, with their concomitant wretchedness, which make the heart of the unaccustomed shudder—if I should summon up the forms of the many wretches who are hourly yielding up their souls in all the agonies of want and despair, and the horrible apprehensions of those who are leaving children to the same inheritance of misery—and if in a transport of philanthropic indignation, I should denounce the atrocious condition of society in which such things could exist, and the people who, callous by habit to all that ought to affect humanity, reject the beneficent institution of domestic slavery, I should act in the same fair, reasonable and philosophic spirit with those who have denounced the horrors of slavery as it exists amongst us. Certain it is that most of this evil could not exist with domestic slavery.

I do not propose to enter into any thing of a detailed examination of this subject, but only as it may have an influence on the moral and intellectual character of the state. It is objected, that inconsistently with our republican profession, and our declaration of the natural equality of men and the right to personal freedom, we maintain the most arbitrary of aristocracies. Whatever may have been said in the fervor of their zeal by those who were in pursuit of the greatest practicable liberty, such natural equality and universal freedom never did and never can exist. We are lovers of liberty, and republicans. Freedom is the great gift of heaven, but like every other

misery :

gift of heaven, it is alloyed by the imperfection of man and of human society. Réason and experience instruct us that in an advanced state of civilization, but a certain portion of liberty can be enjoyed under any human institutions; and we have no ground to believe that under ours, a less considerable share is secured, or in a less desirable form. Ours is indeed an aristocracy, founded on the distinction of races, and conformable, as we believe, to the order of nature. But in what community is it that something equivalent does not exist? Do you call that liberty, which is united with "much abject toil, with great misery, with all the exterior of servitude;" which is excluded (justly and necessarily, perhaps) from all political privileges, and which feels its inferiority of rank as strongly as if the many were of different races? It is an aristocracy, as all the great and successful republics of the world have been aristocracies. It is an aristocracy; but it has this advantage, that the privileged class is larger in proportion to the whole society—the advantage of rank is conferred on a greater number—than in any civilized community that has heretofore existed.

It is an aristocracy, and we by our position are *conservatives*; and it is our business to show that conservatives are the truest reformers. We will not overturn the fundamental institutions of society; but we will improve them to the utmost where they are capable of improvement—supply their deficiencies, and remedy their abuses. It is by this aristocratic feature that we hope to preserve a republican form of policy; and by this alone, as I firmly believe, can it be perpetuated. Already among our confederate States, in which universal suffrage exists, and domestic slavery is excluded, we hear of schemes of universal education at the public expense, and of agrarianism. What is likely to be the condition of those states, when in consequence of increasing population and the increased difficulty of obtaining subsistence, the whole political power shall pass into the hands of men without property, without the means of education, and consequently with defective intelligence and morality, and continually excited to innovation by the exigence of their condition. If there be any thing certain in human affairs, it is certain that this day will arrive sooner or later, and we already see the indications of its approach. Among us, it is certain that a great majority of those who are to exercise political power must be possessed of property. The employment of the poor—the menial and laborious offices of society—are occupied by those who have no political power. We can have no soldiery maintained in foreign wars by the spoils of conquered countries, nor plebeians at home supported by public donatives. If we are true to ourselves, we shall certainly have a larger proportion than any people ever had, of education, intelligence and character, in those who are to exercise political power. While domestic slavery exists, it must of necessity operate to hold together the free citizens in a bond of common interest, for maintaining the security of property and the peace and order of society. We can afford to be republicans. Fortunate is the condition and high the destinies of the people of these Southern States, if they can but rise to the level of their condition and destinies. From the portentous political movements which agitate the rest of the civilized world, I believe it is impossible for the profoundest sagacity to divine whether they will result in an improved condition of human affairs in relation to government, or whether, after running the usual course of tur-

bulence and licentiousness, nations will not be subjected to a more arbitrary control than before. To my judgment the latter result seems more probable. It may be, that on these depreciated Southern States will devolve the protection of property, law, justice, order, religion and true liberty, when the rest of the world shall be involved in the wildest anarchy or subjected to the sternest despotism.

Among the effects of domestic slavery, whether for good or for evil, will be that we shall have less than other people of the spirit of commerce. The general occupation is and must be agriculture, and in it we shall be able to practice a less exact economy than is used where the laborer's compensation depends on his care and diligence. The planter who disposes of his crop in the gross, will have less of the spirit of trade than the farmer, whose daily occupation is one of traffic. We find the fact to correspond with the inference. But this may not be without its compensation. A circumstance in which the great nations of antiquity are said to have mainly differed from those of modern times, is, that the people of the former lived less for themselves and more for the public and the State. The latter, in consequence of the commercial spirit, live more for themselves, for their domestic concerns, and the acquisition of wealth. Resembling the ancients in our institutions, we should resemble them in their public spirit. Where every citizen is raised to the rank of patrician (unless he be degraded from it by his own qualities) he should be more anxious to do honor to his rank by his personal character, and feel more interest in the prosperity and more pride in the fame of the commonwealth. He should know that however laudable and necessary may be the proper pursuit of wealth, it is not the highest, much less the exclusive pursuit. To elevate the moral and intellectual character of himself, of his fellow citizens, of his country—these are the first and highest objects. Admirable as the morality of Franklin is, for its own purposes, a higher and more generous morality is requisite for slave-holders. Unless in this respect we can excel others, we shall fall below others in all respects. The "higher and more stubborn" spirit of liberty, which is said to spring naturally from our institutions, must be carefully cherished, if we would be worthy of our destiny, and every citizen should more jealously guard his title to personal consideration and political equality.

It is because we have this aristocracy, that we have less of any other invidiously aristocratic distinction, and that every freeman may truly claim to be the peer of every other freeman. It is true, that which Burke calls the natural aristocracy, must always exist among a people fit for freedom—not created by law, or accompanied with any distinction of civil privileges, but founded on opinion. Besides the respect to official authority, as representing the State, there must exist the consideration, deference, respect and influence which are yielded to superior worth, to virtue, talent and public service. These qualities may be counterfeited or abused, and should be scrupulously scanned and watched. But if a people be not sufficiently enlightened to distinguish the true metal from the counterfeit, and have not virtue enough to appreciate it—if these qualities are regarded with an invidious spirit, impatient that others should have any sort of advantage which it does not itself possess, and the unworthy capriciously elevated from a fellow-feeling—I, too, may

*misers* :

claim what he has obtained—that people is unfit for freedom, and will find a master. We have heard from some portions of our country, of complaints concerning the aristocracy of learning. On the same reason, the aristocracy of moral character should be odious. Every one, under pain of proscription, should be forbidden to aspire to superior knowledge or virtue. Where such feelings are generally diffused, equality will, indeed, exist, but it will be the equality of the very lowest moral and intellectual debasement. Instead of the modesty which distinguished a Roman or Lacedemonian youth—instead of the “dignified obedience and subordination of the heart” which must distinguish him who is himself to achieve any high purpose, we may expect that youth from the cradle will learn to disclaim all control, and to venerate nothing, whether of age, greatness or virtue. The sacredness of parental authority will be disregarded; the slave himself may claim to mix in the general saturnalia; and the whole of society will be resolved into a base, vicious disorganized herd. We believe it to be one of the advantages of our institutions that those who are to form public opinion will be of higher intelligence and higher character, better able to distinguish, and more willing to appreciate that which deserves their respect and confidence.

Nor do I hesitate to say, that property should have its just weight in society. I do not mean that any servile deference should be paid to it, but that it should be allowed the natural influence which it will obtain, unless counteracted by something in the character or manners of its possessor. An artificial odium should not be excited against it. It is by the accumulation of capital that great works for the benefit of society are accomplished. A main purpose of government is the protection of property; and his voice should be respected in matters of government who has the greatest interest in them. He who possesses wealth, has given security to society for his good behaviour. If he has acquired it by his own exertions, he has given presumptive evidence of intelligence, industry, and orderly habits. If he has inherited it, he has had an opportunity of acquiring liberal ideas and a cultivated intellect. These presumptions may be contradicted in the instances of individuals; and then, to be sure, their wealth should be no protection from the disesteem which their personal qualities may incur. If wealth begets arrogance—always more offensive than any other arrogance—the owner can have no right to complain that it should become odious. Where every Freeman claims to be possessed of rank and privilege, it is not likely that extravagant deference will be paid to mere wealth.

It is one of the effects of our peculiar institutions, that crime—disgraceful crimes, and especially offences against property—will be much diminished, and this for a very obvious reason. The great bulk of the indigent, menial, and laborious class, from which are drawn the criminals of other countries, are restrained from the commission of crimes by the constant, uninterrupted superintendence of a police, which has the highest possible interest to perform its duty faithfully, and every possible advantage for performing it effectually. Every plantation has this police in the proprietor and his agents. With some advantages for forming an opinion on the subject, though without the means of precise information, I venture to express the conviction, that not one fifth of the number of offences against property are committed within this State, that are committed in any other community of

equal age and equal population, where slavery does not exist. And of such offences committed, far the greater part are committed by those who are not natives of the State. To us, penitentiaries and prison discipline are things nearly superfluous. I do not hesitate to express the assured belief, that with proper efforts on our part, and a very practicable degree of improvement, disgraceful crimes, so far as our own citizens are concerned, may be eradicated from our community. It is very proper that such should be more severely punished than elsewhere. And not only crimes, but every violation of honor, truth, and honesty, should be more disgraceful among us. He who is guilty of these, not only violates morality, but betrays his rank, adopts the vice of a slave, and brings a stigma upon his whole caste. He should, therefore, be more deeply stigmatized by public opinion, and more sternly repelled by his equals. For similar reasons, female character should be higher, purer, and more feminine. We cannot enjoy the advantages of our condition, without performing its duties, and unless in these qualities we rise above others, we shall fall disgracefully below them.

An objection has been made to the moral effects of slavery—not so much by those who have had any opportunity of observing them practically, but those who reason theoretically and from supposed principles of human nature—that the exercise of an unlimited and unquestioned authority, even from infancy, must tend to render the masters arrogant, cruel and insubordinate as citizens; and Eastern and Roman Tyrants and their appalling cruelties have been quoted as examples of the effect which the possession of arbitrary power is likely to have on human beings. As if there were any analogy between an individual raised above all emulation, all control of law, all hearing of opinion; who, having exhausted the harmless enjoyments of his solitary eminence, in that craving for excitement which is the first want of human beings, resorts to the morbid stimulus of cruelty—and men moving in society, among their equals, controlled by law, having their fortunes to advance or preserve, having competition to encounter, and their claims to the esteem and consideration of others to establish. The case of military or naval officers, who have been long in the habit of exercising very arbitrary authority, would be more analogous. Is it found that these are more indifferent to the sufferings of others; more cruel, arrogant and insubordinate than others? The reverse is nearer the truth. He who has been accustomed not only to command, but to protect others; to provide for their wants and relieve their distresses, will, if his nature be not unusually perverse, acquire an habitual and humane interest in the objects of his care. Accustomed to require prompt obedience and knowing its necessity, he will learn to pay it where it is due. What is there in the relation of master and slave to give rise to these dissocial feelings? Here can be no competition of interest, or ambition, or any thing else—the causes which commonly excite the hostile passions of men towards their equals. He meets nothing but submission and, unless it be his own fault, warm attachment. What might be apprehended is, that accustomed to this unqualified submission in his domestic relations, he should be arrogant and impracticable when brought into contact with equals. But he will meet with those whose characters have been formed under the same circumstances with his own, and his arrogance will be repelled with equal arrogance. This discipline is calculated

\* Are not slaves generally pilferers?

to form a character of lofty and tempered courtesy, which practises, to those who are subject to its power, the greatest humanity and consideration; which, demanding respect for itself, willingly yields to others what itself requires, and promptly repels every aggression on that self-respect. To this should be joined the utmost directness in all its purposes, and fearlessness in the avowal of all opinions. This is the character which nature indicates to slave-holders. This character we hope may be attributed to slave-holders, as well as to military officers.

It has been objected also to the moral effects of slavery, that by exempting so great a number of persons in society from the necessity of bodily or mental labor, it disposes them to indolence and voluptuousness, and is a hindrance to energy of character and intellectual excellence. If these things are characteristic of slaveholding communities, I am well-assured they are not the necessary concomitants of slavery, but arise from causes which may be removed by the progress of knowledge and well directed exertion. That if men are exempted from the necessity of labor, and have no taste for intellectual pursuits, they are apt, in search of excitement, to fall into profligacy, is undoubtedly true, and equally true under every form of civil policy on earth. But what is the inference from this? That it is a misfortune to any country that a large portion of its people should be exempted from the necessity of labor, and thus enjoy the means and the leisure for intellectual cultivation? This we believe has never been imagined before. On the contrary, it is one—the most signal advantage of our situation—that there does exist so large a class of this sort. The true inference is, that every exertion should be used to diffuse the taste for intellectual pursuits, and that public opinion should stigmatize as disgraceful the conduct of an individual who having the means of liberally educating his children, fails to apply them, or of cultivating his own mind and neglects to make use of them. Compare the degree of time and attention which it is necessary for an independent planter to bestow personally on his affairs, with what is required in any other trade, avocation or profession, and his immense advantage in leisure for intellectual pursuits will be evident. Agriculture is almost the universal pursuit. A very large proportion of our citizens are independent in their circumstances. Is it a trifling advantage, that unless we are false to ourselves and throw away the advantages which God has put into our power, we may have the largest class of liberally educated citizens that is to be found on the face of the earth? Mr. Rush, in his account of the Court of St. James, mentions his having assigned to Mr. Bentham, as a reason why so large a proportion of eloquent and enlightened statesmen were found in our public councils from the slaveholding States—the leisure afforded by slavery. But this advantage has not hitherto been improved to a fifth part of the extent that it is capable of being improved. It has often been the subject of lamentation that great talents, which might have enlightened the world, have been lost to it by want of the means of cultivation. Is it not a signal advantage that the class should be infinitely increased in which such talent may be expected to appear? So far from slavery's impairing energy of character, the natural effect would seem to be the reverse. Were the Grecian and Roman republics wanting in energy? Were they whose labors still adorn the earth which their wisdom instructs, indifferent to manly and intellectual

pursuits? I may observe that the history of these great republics, from which the rest of the world learns wisdom, may be studied with double advantage and instruction by us. The slave-holder is trained from infancy to the habit of command. He must perform the duties of a law-giver, a judge, and a governor; and if he regards his own interest and happiness, or the well-being of those intrusted to his care, he must learn to perform them with vigor and decision. Not with passion or cruelty, but with firmness and wisdom. He, as well as they, will find his advantage in the practice of all humanity; but it must be humanity unmixed with weakness. It is not only on board a vessel of war that is found the happiness of being well commanded. No human being can be contented who does not perform the duties of his proper station. I can conceive no beings more miserable than slaves left to their own control, by the indolence or weakness of their master. This government should seem to be no bad discipline for fitting men to grapple with the affairs of life. I believe it will be found that the military spirit is highest, and military resources greatest, in a slaveholding country. It is matter of congratulation that something has been done among us towards the investigation of the proper management and moral discipline of slaves, and perhaps the subject may with advantage be still further pursued.

I can conceive no situation more dignified or enviable than that of an educated and independent planter of South Carolina, who is duly sensible of its advantages. To be sure, the dignity and advantage will be lost, if conversant only with his slaves and crops, he supposes himself to owe no duty to society but the care of his own fortune. It is observed in an admirable work which should be read and studied by every one,\* and which is no less a work of moral than of physical science, that a due exercise of the moral and intellectual faculties is essential to the full enjoyment of even bodily health. Labor is in some degree a substitute for this to those who labor; but for those who do not, there is no substitute. It is peculiarly the business and duty of a planter to be a politician. It is indeed the duty of every man to take an interest in the political affairs of his country; but this duty devolves more peculiarly on the educated and independent planter. As war and politics were the avocations of the Roman youth, so, literature and politics must be the business of ours. I do not mean that the Romans did not cultivate literature, or that we may not have wars, but I speak of the general and predominating employments. It has often been a subject of complaint that the profession to which I have the honor to belong, obtains too great a control in political affairs; and perhaps there may be some ground for the complaint. Independently of their habits of public speaking, it is owing to this—that their studies and pursuits are most analogous to those of the legislator, and best qualify them to discharge the duties of that office. If this be an evil, it is plainly one that cannot be corrected until there shall be a class of educated and enlightened planters, who shall make politics their business and qualify themselves for discharging the duties of legislation—not by that perverted and superficial knowledge which is to be gained from newspapers and periodical publications; which is but one remove, and that perhaps not an advantageous one, from utter ignorance; but by a thorough investigation and comprehension of the principles and business of govern-

\* Combe on Physiology and the Preservation of Health.

ment. In every free government—that is, every government of laws—lawyers must have much to do with the business of legislation; but undoubtedly it is desirable that the predominating influence should be that which is identified with the great and predominating interest of the country. And the statesmen thus formed, of more liberal views, and untrammeled by technical habits, will have much advantage over the professional lawyer. It has been observed that eminent lawyers have not risen to the highest rank as politicians, or come into advantageous comparison with statesmen who were not lawyers. There will be nothing more to desire in relation to government, when its affairs shall be chiefly under the control of such a class of liberal, high spirited, disinterested, independent and enlightened statesmen.

To qualify any one to sustain this character, he should have a general and elementary acquaintance with the laws of his own country, and a similar knowledge (easily to be obtained) of natural and international law. To this must be added the principles of political economy, and a thorough acquaintance with history, the great store of political wisdom. Not history superficially read, in compilations and abridgements, but carefully studied and reflected on in the great original histories: especially weighing and comparing them and drawing his own conclusions when they treat of the same era and have been written under a different bias. Of the professed writers on government, though it might seem that, written in so remote an age and at so early a period of society, they should be inapplicable to our times and affairs, yet I know of few works more worthy to be recommended than the Politics of Aristotle. Little of what is just or profound on the principles of government has appeared since, of which the traces may not be found there.\*

The universal learning and research of Montesquieu render his great work indispensable to one who would have a full acquaintance with the theory of government. Madame de Staél's reflections on the French Revolution contain many true and original political thoughts. But above all, I would recommend the speeches and political writings of Burke. For however some may differ from him in his views of the character and tendency of the French Revolution, yet with respect to the general maxims and reflections with which his works abound, and which were intended not only for a particular time or occasion, but for all time, it is little to say of them that they comprehend the profoundest wisdom clothed in the noblest eloquence. Perhaps the gorgeousness of imagination which embellishes his works may have hindered their effect; men have felt a sort of incredulity that so much pains should have been taken in adorning thoughts which were capable of making their way by their own intrinsic truth and force. Inculcating always a sound, generous, elevated and practical morality, and utterly repudiating any inconsistency of private and political morality, he is no less the great moral than the great political philosopher of modern times. And great as may be the influence which he has exercised on the affairs of the world, and much as his name has been in the mouths of men, I venture to predict that he has not yet begun to gather his fame. There is no part of knowledge or literature, however, which will not be of use to

\* The English translation of this work is said to be very defective—a matter to be regretted.

the statesman. But more essential than all that can be derived from books, is the habit of attentive and accurate observation of men and the progress of affairs, together with patient thought and reflection. A question has been sometimes made, whether a life of domestic privacy were not to be preferred to one connected with public affairs. If we should take the case of a single, isolated individual, much might be said. The toil, the anxiety, the occasional harsh collision, the misrepresentation and calumny, which are the lot of the politician, are things formidable to be encountered. But these are "the rough brake that virtue must go through." What if all who are capable of rendering public service should reason thus? If all the educated, the intelligent, and those who have a stake in the community, should retire into an indolent and selfish independence, could they justly complain that public affairs were mismanaged, or that the ignorant and unworthy obtained predominance? It is not only a duty to society but to himself and his own highest interest, that he who is capable should render his aid in the management of public affairs.

Contrary to what has been often said, I think it the duty of every one who has the means of influence in society, to cultivate popularity. Not certainly by any unworthy arts—but there are worthy arts of popularity; and the first and most efficacious of these is to merit well. The man who displays extraordinary talent, gives proof of uncommon integrity and firmness, or renders a distinguished public service, does honor to his community as well as to himself. They rise with his elevation; they are sensible of this, and even self-love disposes them to cherish him. So far from being true, that a servile compliance with every popular impulse—or that still viler spirit, which, thinking meanly of popular morality and intelligence, and counting on their bias to wrong, for its own purposes and that it may seem to lead, hastens to anticipate every popular error and delusion, and thereby most commonly creates them—so far from these being requisite, they are, I am persuaded, inconsistent with a permanent and well-grounded popularity. They may succeed for an occasion, but the feather which rises on the breeze will fall with it. I think it will be found that the public men who, in the spirit of even a stubborn integrity, have refused to yield one jot of what they believed to be the truth and right, have been most firmly sustained by the popular opinion. Simplicity of manners may be well cultivated—a simplicity neither inconsistent with refinement nor dignity. But it is essential that there should be that good faith—so difficult to counterfeit—which, with no oblique purpose, diligently searches for, and honestly intends, the true interest and honor of his community. It may indeed be counterfeited for a time; but the counterfeit is always trusted with some misgivings. The effect of integrity and independence may be lost, if they are accompanied with superciliousness or an impracticable spirit. He who desires the confidence of his fellow-citizens, should address them as reasonable beings, capable of comprehending truth and disposed to pursue that which is just and honorable. These are the honest arts of popularity, and he who pursues them, though he may fall in public estimation for a time, let him bate no jot of heart or hope—time will tell truth and he will rise again; while the unworthy demagogue who falls, is fallen forever. In the present uncertain condition of human affairs in relation to government, does it not well become those who

have any thing to lose, to strengthen by every honest means that influence which may enable them to give a safe direction to the public opinion.

Whether it be attributed to our Southern climate, our more mixed descent, or something in the nature of our institutions, our people have been supposed peculiarly excitable; and more disposed to enthusiasm than elsewhere. Nature gives no disposition in vain, and if we are true to the principle of following nature, we shall seek to cultivate this—to give it a proper direction, and guard against its defects and abuses. I believe that no great purpose was ever accomplished—no man was ever great—without enthusiasm. Its obvious use and effect are to give zeal and activity in the pursuit of any object; and without these what important object can be accomplished? It is characteristic of a true enthusiasm, that it cannot be excited unless in a cause which is, at least, believed to be good and honorable. There cannot be any true enthusiasm in the pursuit of a base or merely selfish object. There may be zeal, there may be intense ness of purpose, but these not partaking in any degree of the elevated feeling of a generous enthusiasm. Our enthusiasm, however, has been supposed to be volatile, soon wearied, and as easily extinguished as kindled—and this is the defect to be remedied. It is our business to fix and concentrate our enthusiasm. That enthusiasm is chiefly to be valued which shuns observation—which can sustain its possessor through years of toil, obscurity, and privation, while he contemplates some great result which is to ensue to posterity, to his country, to mankind. This is the enthusiasm to be cultivated.

From perhaps the same causes, we have been supposed to be peculiarly imaginative. Some philosophers have seemed to think the imagination a superfluous faculty in the constitution of the human mind—an irregularity to be subdued, or an excrescence to be eradicated; that it is something opposed to truth, and only calculated to bewilder and mislead. The successful exercise of the power of imagination has been supposed to depend on a fancied inspiration, and not to require labor or consistent exertion, and to be calculated to form a character of dreaming indolence, averse from reason, and unfit for any manly or practical purpose of life. If such indeed were its character and effects, it would deserve to be exterminated. It is perhaps because such notions have obtained, that, though disposed to the exercise of imagination, so little that is excellent of the works of imagination has been produced among us. Yet the common consent of mankind has ranked the productions of the imagination as the highest exertion of human genius and intellect, and we can hardly suppose this general consent to be without some foundation in nature. They misconceive of imagination, who suppose it to be averse from reason, or to require less sedulous cultivation and discipline. So far from this, I will venture to say that there never was any great work of imagination produced—there never was a truly great and exalted imagination—where there was not a vigorous and cultivated reason. There must be a balance among the faculties to allow any of them to attain their highest excellence. What was it that distinguished Shakspeare, Burns, or Byron, but their masculine and vigorous sense? What long and patient labor, in efforts to conceive what is great and new, and to restrain what is false and extravagant, were required to fit the muse of Milton to rise to the height of her great argument—what unwearied training, ere

the eagle was taught to soar his empyrean flight on even wing! It is not the indolent dreamer, who shrinks from the difficulties of science or the collisions of society, that will make a great poet. What acute, attentive, practical observation of men and human affairs, formed, the mind of Shakspeare? Milton, endowed with all the learning of his time, was a zealous patriot and active statesman.

Nor is reason itself less subject to error and delusion. Who does not know the infirmity and thousand errors of human reason? Imagination has a reason of her own, and a truth of her own; and these, perhaps, of a higher nature. But true imagination and just reason will always be found to concur. I speak of truth in its most extensive sense. True imagination is not to make extravagant and fantastical combinations of things which never existed in nature, and of which we cannot conceive as existing in nature. The painter who drew the monster described by Horace, evinced no power of imagination. It is to create that which will be complete, consistent with itself, and conformable to propriety and nature. Of all poetical thoughts, those are the finest and truest, not which create most surprise, but which find an echo in the heart of every one who hears them; which every one feels to have been in his mind before, though not embodied or expressed, and which seem to give back more distinctly the image already existing there. The same thing may be said of all the productions of the fine arts. Is there less truth in Lear, Othello, Hamlet, Shylock, or even Puck and Caliban, than in the narratives of Herodotus, or Livy? Are the works of Le Sage, Fielding, or Scott, less instructive than those of Seneca or Epictetus? To be sure, there has been a multitude of what have been called works of imagination, consisting of imbecile or extravagant conceptions of things which have no prototype in nature, or of the travestied images which have been borrowed from other men's minds. These may have been produced with little labor or cultivation of any of the intellectual faculties, and well deserve the censure to which I have referred. But long exercise, severe labor, the cultivation of all knowledge, the observation of all nature, both animate and inanimate, the most watchful, unsparing diligence in pruning and retrenching every thing that exceeds the bounds of truth and nature, are the conditions of excellence in works of imagination.

Genius has been well defined the faculty of perceiving truth without the consciousness of intermediate reasoning. The rapidity of the process gives it the name of intuition. But what is this but the exercise of imagination? When Newton saw the apple fall, what was it that made his great discovery? What, but his exalted imagination, flying through the whole of nature, and conceiving all her workings, in search of the possible solution of the phenomenon before him, which its own high instinct enabled it to fix upon when it had lighted on the true one. This it was necessary to verify by reasoning, and the demonstration of science, both to guard against possible error, and that the discovery might be available to others; but it is still to imagination that the discovery was due. And so it may be said of every other discovery which is not the effect of accident. It is the power of invention. What imagination was ever more lofty than that of Bacon? By reason alone a man may learn successfully what others have known, and practise skilfully what others have done; but he who would enlarge the boundaries of knowledge, or the powers of human intellect, must possess a vigorous and cultivated imagination.

But, the chief office of the imagination is to be an instructress of the higher morals. It is said by Bacon in reference to heroic poetry, "as the active world is inferior to the rational soul, so poetry gives that to mankind which history denies ; and in some measure satisfies the mind with the shadows when it cannot enjoy the substance. For upon a narrow inspection, poetry strongly shows that a greater grandeur of things, a more perfect order and a more beautiful variety, is pleasing to the mind that can any where be found in nature after the fall. So that as the actions and events which are the subjects of true history, have not the grandeur which satisfies the mind, poetry steps in and feigns more heroical actions. And as real history gives us not the success of things according to the deserts of virtue and vice, poetry corrects it, and presents us with the fates and fortunes of persons rewarded or punished according to merit. And as real history disgusts us with a familiar and constant similitude of things, poetry relieves us by unexpected turns and changes, and thus not only delights, but inculcates morality and nobleness of soul. Whence it may justly be esteemed of a divine nature ; as it raises the mind by accommodating the images of things to our desires ; and not like history and reason, subjecting the mind to things." When the mathematician inquired, what does poetry prove ? it might have been replied, that it proves the true nature of man and the proper objects of human pursuits. It proves man's aspirations after, and if we suppose nature to be ordered by a divine intelligence which has made nothing in vain, it more than any thing else proves his capacity of making unlimited progress in moral and intellectual improvement.

The emotion excited by the mere perception of beauty and perfection in a work of imagination, is a moral feeling. The Germans have a science of beauty in poetry and the fine arts, which they regard as the highest moral science. "Whatever withdraws us from the power of the senses ; whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future, predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings." To enjoy the ideas of truth, order, beauty, grandeur and power, inspired by a work of art, is to cultivate the moral nature. To inculcate the contempt of all that is sordid, the emulation of all that is great and generous, and the love of what is good and fair, is the business of poetry. All the sentiments and feelings which most purify and elevate our nature and prompt to worthy actions—generous ambition, the love of fame, the care for posterity, the veneration for greatness, patriotism, love, and—not to take from but to add to the reverence with which it should be regarded—religion, are connected with and in a good degree dependent on the imagination. If reason be the characteristic faculty which distinguishes us from inferior animals, it is imagination which allies us to divinity. It partakes of creative power.

But the instrument so powerful for good is not less potent for evil. Well is "the imagination of the thoughts of man's heart" described as the source of evil. Almost every crime is familiarized by the imagination before it is acted. It summons up dangers and difficulties as impediments to every honorable and manly enterprize or exertion. It creates designs which never were formed and motives which were never entertained. These perversions are to be guarded against by the cultivation and exercise of a vigorous reason. As it is the business of imagination to stimulate reason and put it in action, it is the business of reason to discipline the imagination and re-

strain its excesses. - But the worst degradation is, when reason itself, which ought to be a co-ordinate estate in the microcosm, is subdued and dragged captive by his associate, and employed only to give form and consistency to her morbid creations—to minister to and confirm her delusions. Then is sacrificed all love of truth and capacity for perceiving it, all energy of purpose and power of useful exertion, all duties of humanity, all enjoyments of life, till the man is rendered intolerable to himself and all with whom he is brought into contact.

This State, we believe, has been distinguished among its confederates, for the talent of public speaking which has been found among its citizens. And here is an indication by nature of something to be cultivated. Some have supposed eloquence to be only the art of cheating the reason and misleading men; or at all events, to be an equally apt instrument for propagating falsehood or recommending truth. If this were so, it would be no reason why we should not cultivate it for purposes of good. But it is not so. The natural employment of eloquence is for good and generous purposes.

There can be no true eloquence without good sense and just and vigorous thought. To this more must be added—the earnestness of thorough conviction and the force of strong feeling. No man can be an orator who is not capable of high, generous and disinterested, as well as intense feeling. There may be imperfection and inequality in the character, but in its predominating qualities, the truly great public orator must be a good patriot and a good man. Who can conceive of *eloquence* employed in enforcing what is felt to be false, base, treacherous or selfish. Enthusiasm is necessary to inspire enthusiasm; but as I have before remarked, there can be no true enthusiasm for any such purpose. There may be dexterous sophistry or efficient reasoning, there may be sense or elegance, there may be learning or agreeable declamation, but there can be nothing that deserves the name of eloquence. The brilliant rewards held out to excellence, are a sufficient incitement that all who possess should cultivate this talent.

It will be perceived that I regard *literature*, as distinguished from *science* more commonly so called, to be better adapted to our pursuit. It is more important, too, as it is more important to elevate and improve the nature and faculties of the man himself, than to increase the amount of his physical enjoyments or enlarge his command over external nature. But let me not be supposed to undervalue the cultivation of any part of knowledge. There are minds of various tastes and powers, and, as I have said, he who is wise will devote himself chiefly to that in which he is best qualified to excel.

In every intellectual effort, we should emulate the highest models. We should study and be daily and familiarly conversant with them—not for the purpose of servile imitation, but that we may borrow, if we can, their spirit, and kindle with the same fire. Then if we fall short of them, we shall at least reach higher than we would otherwise have attained. He who aspires to no more than mediocrity, will not attain even mediocrity. No man in execution comes up to his own standard of excellence. If we select for models those who have obtained only a local or temporary reputation—who are only great by the littleness of all around them—we shall fall short even of these. If a wooden idol be selected as the object of adoration, can the worshipper be otherwise than degraded?

ANNIVERSARY ORATION.

Among the subjects to which the attention of the Society may be properly directed, I may mention the history of our own State. The history of the original settlement of the State is very imperfectly known, and perhaps our own country does not afford the materials for supplying such a deficiency. We are aware, however, that in Europe such materials to a considerable extent may be found. The Legislature has done something in ascertaining the existence of these, and perhaps the enterprize could not be better prosecuted than under the auspices of this society. There must have been much of wild adventure, of intrepid daring and severe suffering, in that first settlement. It would be interesting to know more personally of the enterprising adventurers who first penetrated the woods of our coast; particularly of those high principled exiles who were descended of the compatriots of Coligny.

There is another portion of our history, too, which has never been fully related; when, during our revolutionary contest, a worse than civil war raged through the whole of our State. A tale of more fearful interest never was told than might be related of that period, when there was war, crime and blood in every neighborhood and almost every house—of such horror and atrocity, that we might wish the remembrance of it lost, were it not instructive and important to the world to know every instance of human folly and wickedness, and the extravagance of human passions—relieved, too, by much of daring enterprize, and noble constancy and virtue in doing and suffering. Every neighborhood has its own peculiar history. It would be almost impossible for any individual to collect these completely; but by means of the Society, the members of which are spread over every portion of the State, it may in a good degree be effected.

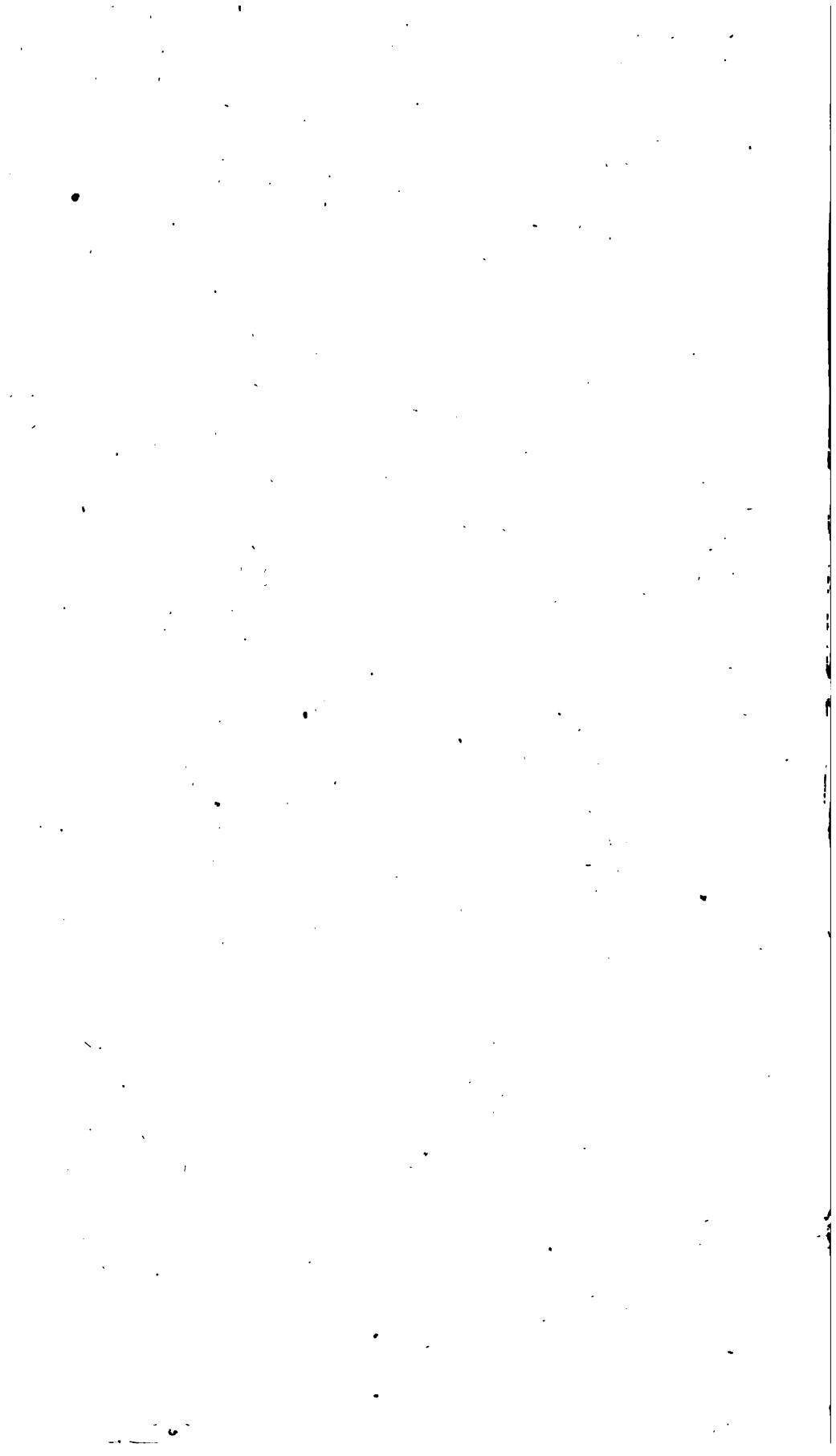
From the extensive range which I have taken, I have been able to treat but in a very summary, and I fear imperfect and superficial manner, the topics which I have introduced.

Let me again advert to the general purposes of our institution. It is for the advancement of Learning in its most generous and extensive sense—to develop all the resources, intellectual and moral, of our parent State. This is inconsiderable in population and territory, and can only derive consideration or respect from the character of her citizens. That respect may be necessary even for our safety. When we regard the uncertain condition of society over the rest of the world—when we see the ominous clouds that are rising in every quarter of our horizon, and hear the mutterings of the earthquake beneath our feet—when it may be that within the lives of those now in being, we may be called on to wage a contest in defence of property, of every civil and every political right—does it not well become us to develop all our resources? and what resource is to be compared to that of ardent, enlightened, and devoted citizens? What is the character by which we hope and believe our State to have been hitherto favorably distinguished, and to the perfection of which nature indicates that we should aspire? Disinterestedness—truth and integrity above all equivocation or suspicion—the utmost humanity—the sense of honor—courtesy, shown even to an adversary, and which, if not due to him, is still due to self-respect—“the ancient Southern courtesy,” as I have lately heard it expressed, which is abhorrent of that spirit of vulgar vituperation in political and other contests, which, worse than the lice and the frogs of Egypt, has overspread our country, to

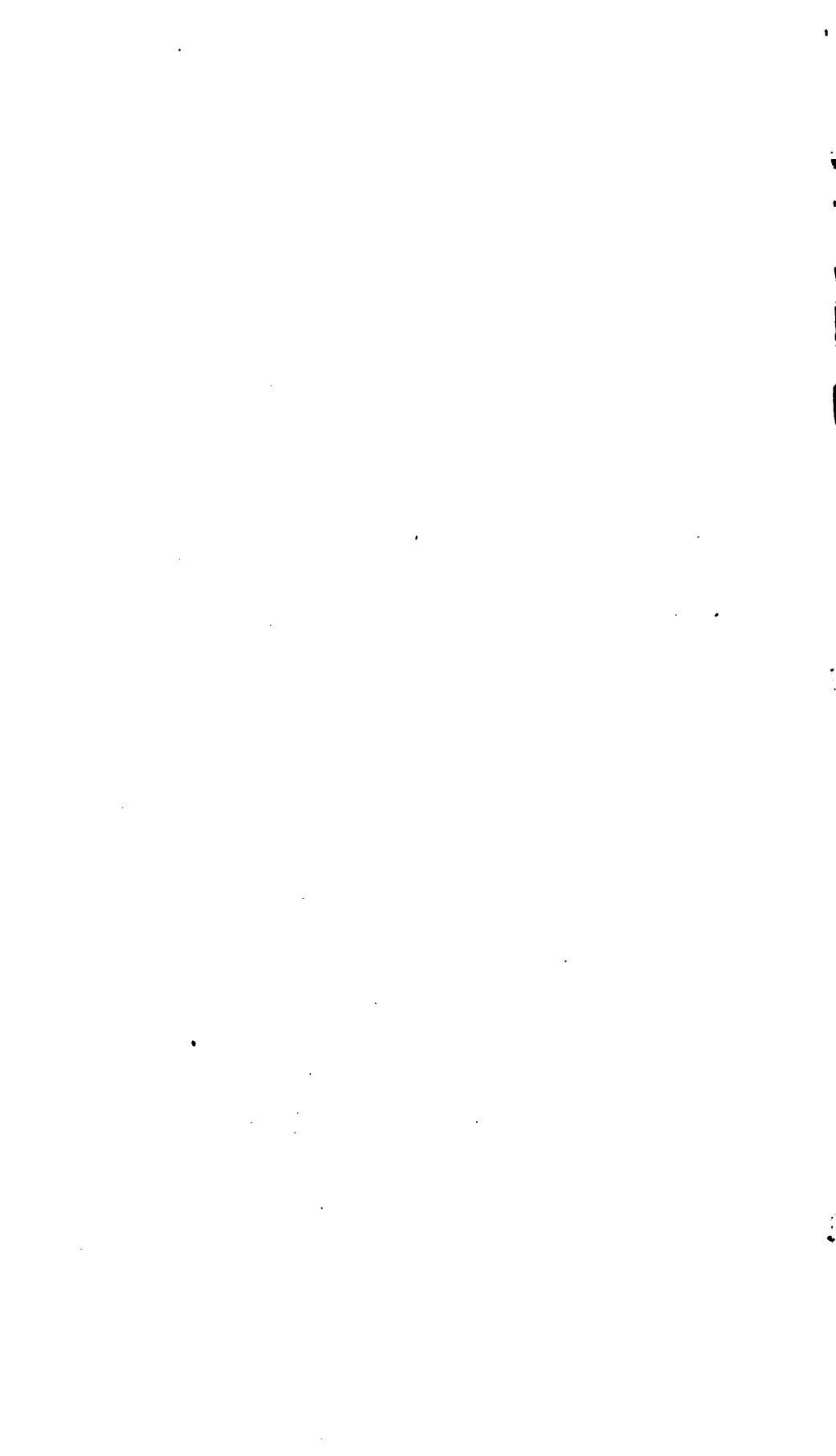
degrade and defile it—true and generous emulation, which seeks to raise itself by the fair exertion of its own powers, and loves the excellence it aspires to equal, not the base competition which would depress others that it may stand on a comparatively higher level—devotion to country—eloquence—the love if not the highest attainments of literature. This is the character which has been won for Carolina by her distinguished citizens who have gone before us. If those who are now rising into life degenerate from it, they will be recreant to their fathers, false to themselves, and traitors to their posterity. Milton says truly and nobly, “I call, therefore, a complete and generous education, that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously, all the offices of a citizen, both private and public, of peace and war.” And it should be our object that every youth of South Carolina should be thus fitted to discharge justly, skilfully, and magnanimously, all the offices of a citizen, both public and private, of peace and war. For this purpose we have associated to second the State, in the wise and noble designs for which she has established her College.

If, in the spirit of performing faithfully and truly the duties of the great partnership of civil society, every individual should zealously seek to qualify himself by an “insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs,” to discharge the duties of a citizen, and consider it one of the purposes of his existence to do something for society, as well as for himself—if every member of a profession should consider it incumbent upon him, not only to regard his own interest or reputation, but to raise the character and the standard of attainment of his whole profession, or to enlarge the boundaries of his science, what results might we not expect? I may here be permitted to observe that the members of the medical profession within our State, (the profession which of all others requires the most variety of learning,) have exerted themselves honorably. My own profession, I regret to say, which claims and receives most of the public—the professors of that science which is called by one most competent to judge, though not himself a lawyer, “the pride of the human intellect, which, with all its defects, redundancies, and errors, is the collected reason of ages, combining the principles of original justice with the infinite variety of human concerns”—these have done nothing, or next to nothing; and I fear that the slightest personal interest or personal convenience would be found to stand in the way of any measure by which the character and attainments of the profession might be raised. But it is not professional men alone; the humblest agriculturist or artisan may hope to do something, make some discovery or improvement, or encourage others to do what may promote the public honor or advantage. Let it be said to every citizen of Carolina—to enlarge the knowledge, stimulate the genius, elevate the character, and promote the happiness of the whole of the society in which you live—“These shall be your arts.”

If this spirit can be generally diffused, what may not be made of our own Carolina? It is for this purpose that we have formed our Society—no light engagement, nor, I hope, lightly undertaken. If we succeed, we shall have achieved the science of Themistocles—how to raise an inconsiderable State to greatness and glory.







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